

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for checking a passenger and baggage into an airline flight, comprising:
obtaining a boarding pass at a first location, the boarding pass containing
5 information associated with the passenger; and
presenting the boarding pass at a second location adjacent a baggage drop
conveyor to check the baggage in accordance with information obtained from
the boarding pass.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information contained on the boarding pass is
10 printed on the boarding pass in the form of a bar code.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising scanning the boarding pass at the second
location to retrieve the information.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the information comprises a destination and
number of bags to be checked.
- 15 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the second location further comprises a central
conveyor and the baggage drop conveyor has a first end and a second end, wherein the first
end of the baggage drop conveyor is adjacent the central conveyor.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the passenger placing the baggage on the
baggage drop conveyor substantially at the second end of the baggage drop conveyor.
- 20 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the baggage drop conveyor comprises a scale and
the method further comprises the step of weighing the baggage with the scale.



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8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first location comprises a remote computer located in a home or office.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the first location comprises an electronic kiosk.

10. A system for checking a passenger and baggage into an airline flight, comprising:
5 a server coupled to a database containing stored passenger and flight information;
a boarding pass station comprising a client computer configured for
communication with the server, the client computer having a processor, a
display, and an associated printer, the processor being capable of executing
program instructions to request itinerary information from the passenger,
10 retrieve information from the database, and cause the printer to print a
boarding pass; and
a baggage drop station located separate from the boarding pass station, the
baggage drop station comprising a central conveyor having an origination end
and a destination end and configured to convey baggage in a direction from
15 the origination end toward the destination end.

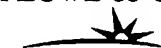
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the boarding pass includes a bar code containing one or more of itinerary information, a number of bags to be checked, or a code associated with a record stored in the database.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the baggage drop station further comprises a
20 baggage drop computer configured for communication with the server, the baggage drop
computer having a processor, a display, a scanner, and an associated printer, the processor
being capable of executing program instructions to receive and interpret images scanned
from the boarding pass by the scanner and to present itinerary information obtained from the
scanned boarding pass on the display.



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13. The system of claim 12, wherein the baggage drop station further comprises a plurality of baggage drop conveyors each having a first end and a second end, wherein the first ends of the baggage drop conveyors are adjacent the central conveyor and the baggage drop conveyors are configured to convey baggage from the second end toward the first end
5 and the central conveyor.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein at least one of the baggage drop conveyors further comprises a scale for weighing baggage placed on the baggage drop conveyor.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the second end of the baggage drop conveyor is lower than the first end.

10 16. The system of claim 14, wherein the client computer is a home or office computer.

17. The system of claim 14, wherein the client computer is located outside the airport.

18. The system of claim 14, wherein the client computer is an electronic kiosk located inside the airport.

19. A system for checking a passenger and baggage into an airline flight, comprising:
15 a means for storing passenger and flight information;
a means for accessing the passenger and flight information to produce a boarding pass containing encoded information; and
a baggage drop station located separate from the boarding pass station, the baggage drop station comprising
20 a means for retrieving the encoded information from the boarding pass;
and



a central conveyor having an origination end and a destination end and configured to convey baggage in a direction from the origination end toward the destination end.

20. A system for checking a passenger and baggage into an airline flight, comprising:

5 a server coupled to a database containing stored passenger and flight information;
a plurality of electronic kiosks, each of the kiosks configured for communication with the server, the kiosks being capable of executing program instructions to request information from the passenger, retrieve flight and passenger information from the database, and cause an associated printer to print a
10 boarding pass, wherein the boarding pass contains an indication of the passenger's name and number of bags to be checked; and

a baggage drop station located separate from the boarding pass station, the baggage drop station comprising (1) a central conveyor having an origination end and a destination end and configured to convey baggage in a direction
15 from the origination end toward the destination end, and (2) a plurality of baggage drop point conveyors extending outward from the central conveyor, the drop point conveyors having a first end adjacent the central conveyor and a second end distant from the central conveyor, the drop-point conveyors further being configured to convey baggage from the second end toward the
20 first end to be deposited onto the central conveyor.

21. The system of claim 20, further comprising one or more sensors associated with the central conveyor and configured to detect the presence of an item on a portion of the central conveyor.



22. The system of claim 21, wherein the plurality of electronic kiosks further comprise a sign indicating that passengers should proceed to the kiosk before proceeding to the baggage drop station.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the drop point conveyors comprise:

5 an initial conveyor, the initial conveyor having an endless belt at least part of which defines an upper surface, the upper surface of the belt being configured to travel from a first end of the initial conveyor to a second end of the initial conveyor; and

10 a staging conveyor, the staging conveyor having an endless belt at least part of which defines an upper surface,

wherein the initial conveyor is configured to deliver bags to the staging conveyor and the staging conveyor is configured to deliver bags to the central conveyor, and further wherein at least a portion of the upper surface of the initial conveyor is relatively lower than a the upper surface of the staging conveyor.

15 24. The system of claim 23, further comprising:

a motor adapted to cause the staging conveyor endless belt to rotate;

a sensor associated with the staging conveyor to detect the presence of an item on the staging conveyor; and

20 a conveyor controller in signal communication with the motor, the staging conveyor sensor, and the one or more sensors associated with the central conveyor and configured to cause the staging conveyor to deposit bags onto the central conveyor only where there are no detected bags on the central conveyor.

25 25. The system of claim 24, wherein the plurality of kiosks are arranged as clusters of adjacent kiosks.



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26. The system of claim 26, further comprising a barrier adjacent the origination end of the central conveyor.



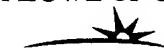
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